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Proceedings

at the

Unveiling of the Portrait of

Rear-Admiral Charles E. Clark

In the State House at Montpelier, Vermont

October 29, 1902

C E Clark

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the Portrait of

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IN THE

STATE HOUSE

AT

Montpelier, Vermont

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JOINT RESOLUTION

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the Clerk of the House of Representatives is hereby directed to procure the printing of one thousand copies of the report of the proceedings attending the unveiling and presentation of the portrait of Rear Admiral Charles E. Clark on October 29th, 1902, for the use of the General Assembly.

JOHN H. MERRIFIELD,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

ZED S. STANTON,
President of the Senate.

Approved November 11, 1902.

JOHN G. McCULLOUGH,
Governor.

STATE OF VERMONT,
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the original resolution approved November 11, 1902.

FREDERICK G. FLEETWOOD,
Secretary of State.

December 2, 1902.

IN JOINT ASSEMBLY,

OCTOBER 29th, 1902. 2.05 P. M.

The Senate and House of Representatives met in the Hall of the House of Representatives, in pursuance of a joint resolution, which was read by the Clerk and is as follows:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the two houses meet in joint assembly on Wednesday, October 29th, instant, at two o'clock and five minutes in the afternoon for the purpose of receiving the portrait of Rear Admiral Charles E. Clark, U. S. N.

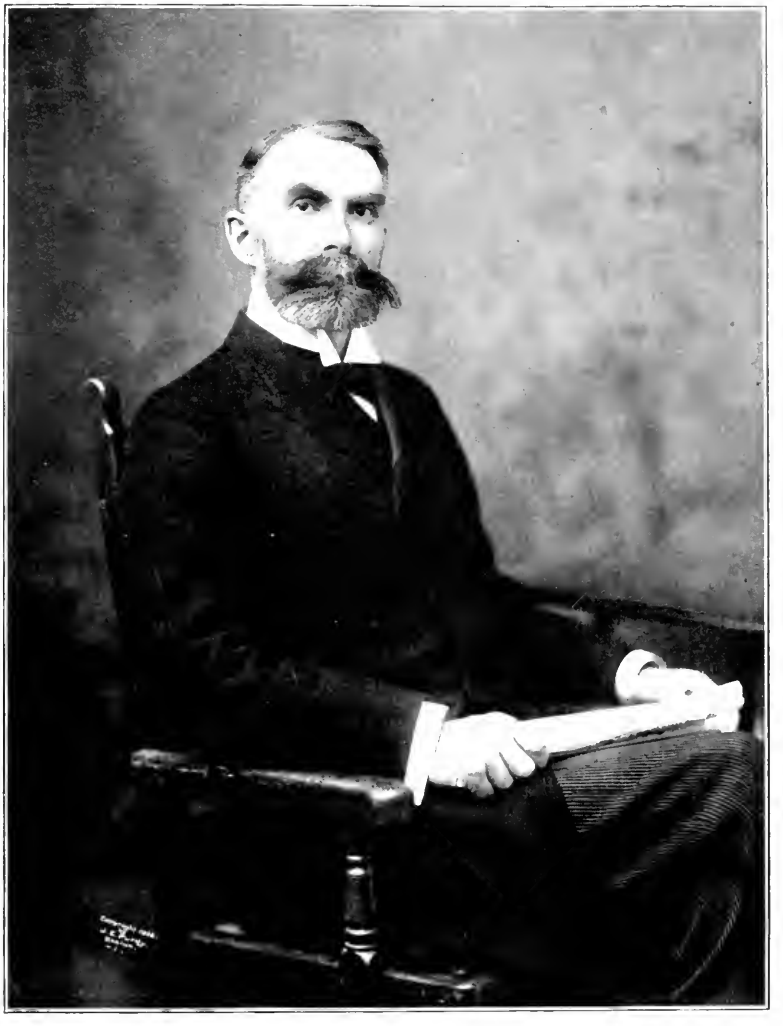
His Honor ZED S. STANTON,
President of the Senate, in the Chair.

FREDERICK G. FLEETWOOD,
Secretary of State, Clerk.

ADDRESS BY

HON. WILLIAM W. STICKNEY

FORMER GOVERNOR OF VERMONT



WILLIAM W. STICKNEY.

ADDRESS

Mr. President:

It is less than a week ago that we met here to pay a fitting tribute to brave Liscum, who "lives in fame, though not in life." The American Army of our time has afforded few finer examples of the true soldier than the Vermonter whom on that occasion we chose to honor.

But he was present in memory alone, and, while the tale of his splendid record was being told, he was sleeping in a soldier's grave in far-away Arlington. We had with us only his portrait, which is, at best, but a counterfeit on canvas of his true self. Beneath a painted breast the heart throbs not, and pictured lips never break into voice to greet us.

To-day we assemble again to honor another distinguished Vermonter, a representative of the American Navy, whose career on the seas has made his name familiar in every land on which the waves of the ocean beat. And it is our good fortune to have with us here both his portrait and his presence. We rejoice that he returns laden with honors which reflect credit upon his native State. We are also glad to find that he still loves the hills and takes pride in his mountain home.

The General Assembly at its October session two years ago adopted a joint resolution which is the prelude of our meeting to-day.

I will ask the Clerk to read it.

The Clerk read as follows:

"*Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:*

That the Governor be, and is hereby commissioned and directed in behalf of the people of the State, to signify to Captain Charles E. Clark, late commander of the United States Battleship Oregon, and a loyal son of Vermont, their desire that he sit for a portrait to be placed, with a suitable inscription, in the State Capitol in commemoration of his distinguished services to his country in command of the Oregon, and as a token of the abiding affection and admiration of all the people of his native State.

Resolved, Further, that the Governor is hereby authorized to contract with a painter of competent ability and experience for the painting of a portrait of Captain Clark for the purpose herein specified, employing in all particulars pertaining thereto his best judgment and discretion; and the State Auditor is hereby directed to draw his order on the State Treasurer in favor of the Governor for any moneys expended, or required to be expended, in the execution of this commission, including the expenses of the Governor incurred therein, and all expenses entailed upon Captain Clark in complying with the request of the General Assembly in respect of the painting of the portrait in question.

And it is specially Resolved, That in taking action on the foregoing proposition, in each house of the General Assembly, the members rise in their places as a distinguishing mark of homage to a commander eminent alike for his ability, his bravery, his devotion to duty, and his modesty, and who has made one of the brightest pages in the naval history of any country."

A copy of the foregoing was sent by me to Captain Clark and the body of his reply is worthy of a place in these proceedings, and was as follows:

"Your highly esteemed letter enclosing a certified copy of the Joint Resolution of the General Assembly of Vermont has been received, and I thank you gratefully for the way in which you speak of the signal honor which has been accorded me, especially for your words, 'One of her sons who has been faithful to every duty.' I cannot read those resolutions without being deeply affected, nor think without emotion of the great distinction that came to me through the action of all the members of both legislative bodies rising when my name was mentioned, representing as they did the State and the people I love so much.

Perhaps the best way for me to acknowledge the obligation I am under to that people and its distinguished representatives, is to refer to the noble ship and company they have so greatly honored through me.

When we left the other ships on the coast of Brazil, and pushed ahead at full speed, I believed the West Indies would be the scene of the decisive conflict, and therefore that the risk of an encounter with the Spanish fleet should be incurred notwithstanding the warnings given of its superiority. These were moments when the responsibilities assumed weighed heavily, but I was inspired by thoughts of the march of the Sixth Corps to Gettysburg under the lamented Sedgwick, whose order was: 'Put the Vermonters at the head and tell the rest to keep up.' And by the memory of Warner's Green Mountain Boys hurrying to save the day at Bennington, that first 'High water mark' of effort against the nation's life, for there began the series of strokes that ended at Saratoga, classed with Gettysburg among the decisive battles of the world."

Under the authority conferred by the resolution which has been read by the Clerk, Mr. Frederic P. Vinton

of Boston, a gentleman eminent in the art of portrait painting, was awarded the commission.

I now have the honor to report that he has completed the work asigned him and produced a portrait which is historical in character.

This morning I received a communication from him which explains itself.

He writes:

"In the portrait of Captain Clark I represent him standing on the top of the thirteen inch gun turret, in front of the conning tower, under the pilot house. Behind him is the six inch gun turret, from which projects the guns trained to starboard and ready to fire. The pilot-house is only two feet above his head. The ship has her war-paint on—a lead colored gray. The Captain's uniform is, as I believe, the identical uniform worn by him at the battle of Santiago, and is correct according to the Naval regulations of that time. During the engagement the officers wore no swords. The moment chosen by me for my painting is that when the Oregon was in full chase of the *Colon*, after having placed the other Spanish ships *hors de combat*,—two of which are seen burning on the beach in the distance. The day of the battle opened fair, but the smoke from the guns later overcast the sky in which, here and there, may be seen patches of blue. To help out my composition I have imagined the smoke from the stacks blowing down to soften the hard line of the pilot-house.

I placed the horizon line low in order to give dignity to the figure. The details of the ship I obtained, in a measure, from studies made on the 'Indiana' when she was in New London. The 'Indiana' is the sister ship of the 'Oregon,' and is like her in essential features of construction. From Captain

Clark I received much information regarding details, the conditions of the sky, etc., and as to his position at the time chosen. From Lieutenant Eberle, who was in close communication with Captain Clark during the battle, I learned the exact details of what I have tried to represent. It was Lieutenant Eberle who wrote the 'Story of the Captains' in the Century Magazine.

In this attempt of mine to paint a *historical* portrait, and not the ordinary portrait of commerce, I feel that I have done what should have been done, and that those who come after us will see what manner of man the *Great Commander* at Santiago (for such he was), was like, and how he looked on the turret of the 'Oregon' during that memorable day.

The Captain has another side to his character, and some may miss in this work of mine, the *bonhomie* which flashes out in his talk when in friendly intercourse; but for the purpose for which this portrait is intended, it seems to me to fairly represent the man, the hero, and the son whom the State delights to honor."

The picture for the present has been placed in the vestibule of the Hall of the House of Representatives, and now, in this Joint Assembly, I deliver it, through His Excellency, Governor McCullough, to the State.

In all the coming years may it remain in this Capitol teaching its lesson of fidelity and valor.

I have said that this portrait is, in character, historical.

Let us recall a few events of recent history:

It has been observed "that upon our national arms the American Eagle is represented as holding in one talon the olive branch of peace, and in the other the shafts of war. He leaves it to his adversaries which to choose."

Spain selected war.

Then in the heart of every patriot all over the land arose the question,—Will this generation also successfully uphold the flag which the fathers so zealously guarded and transmitted to their keeping?

In the combat, which came and went with almost the rapidity of shadows traversing the mountain side, the conduct of the men of this nation is eloquent. It declares that patriotism is not dying out.

In the achievements of the Spanish war we were not behind the other States of the Union. Vermont has no seaboard and it is remarkable that she took so prominent a part in the fights on the water.

It is modern history that in obedience to the command of his superiors to find the Spanish squadron and destroy it, Dewey by night entered Manila Bay, passed forts, sailed over mines, and as soon as the dawn appeared attacked Montojo's fleet and disabled it, and, long before noon-day finished its complete destruction and put the Philippines under the protection of our flag.

But, to-day, our interest centers around the sailor who crowned us with honor in the battle which destroyed Cervera's ships. It is now everywhere acknowledged that the typical hero in that fight was Captain Clark who sailed the Oregon. He said little but did much.

It has been said that the triumph of American mechanical genius was in the construction of the Oregon, and that in her management was the triumph of American mechanical skill.

This battle-ship was built upon honor.

With machinery in perfect order and at high speed she ploughed the deep through crest of the wave and trough of the sea,—the length of two oceans. For the sailor in command was complete master of the situation. It is still true as Gibbon said, "The winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators."

When at Bahia, Clark learned from the government that Cervera's fleet was crossing the Atlantic and he was warned to be on the lookout and privileged to remain there safe-harbored under pretense of repairing his ship. But he stayed not.

He said, in substance, to his men: "Lads, I am going out. The Spanish ships are upon the sea. It is idle to underrate their strength; but if we do meet them they will not look as well afterwards as they did before."

He was not destined, however, to meet the Spanish fleet alone.

You remember how one Sunday morning in July just thirty-five years after Gettysburg the Spanish commander made his fatal dash to escape from Santiago Bay,

and how our battleships and cruisers and other vessels, that kept guard, attacked the Spanish squadron.

The ships on either side were not altogether unequal.

The inequality was rather in the men and their leaders. When the smoke from the enemy's ships first arose over Sacopa Hill and the command was given, "All hands clear ship for action," the fires under the boilers of the Oregon were all aglow, her steam was up and she was the first battleship to move.

Although standing next to the eastermost ship in the line, she started west and with streaming pennant passed the Iowa and the Texas.

Clark had saved the best coal for the emergency, and he now used it to advantage and sent his ship after the enemy with the speed of a cruiser.

When the Spanish Admiral swung out of the harbor into the ocean his entire fleet was raked fore and aft with shot and shell, and the whole squadron left a heap of ruins along the shore.

Five of his ships were beached within twenty miles from the start, while the Christobal Colon was chased for fifty miles and pounded to destruction by the Oregon and Brooklyn.

Let it not be forgotten that the Oregon never abandoned a ship of the enemy until disabled and put out of service.

Of the Oregon in her pursuit of the Colon, one, who knew, said: "Captain Clark saw the danger and had a talk with the engine room and the great gray ship, sound in wind and limb, responded to the call like a noble horse that feels the spurs. The strength of a nation that knows no defeat was in her frames and the pride of that nation fought her guns and guided her with a sure hand."

There is a document in the Navy Department at Washington which concludes as follows: "I cannot close this report without mentioning in high terms of praise the splendid conduct and support of Captain C. E. Clark of the Oregon. Her speed was wonderful and her accurate firing splendidly destructive."

Our Captain, vigilant and brave, has never tarnished his shield by any scramble for precedence or promotion. He sought position, it is true, but it was the position confronting the foe that he might smite the assailants of our flag with blows which would tell.

He is a Vermonter, and his whole action has consisted in doing his best in the line of duty. And when the record of that famous sea fight off the southern shore of Cuba is ultimately fixed in history, high on the

scroll of honor and above all others, will be the name of Captain Clark of the Oregon.

This mountaineer has established at least three maxims for the future conduct of naval warfare:

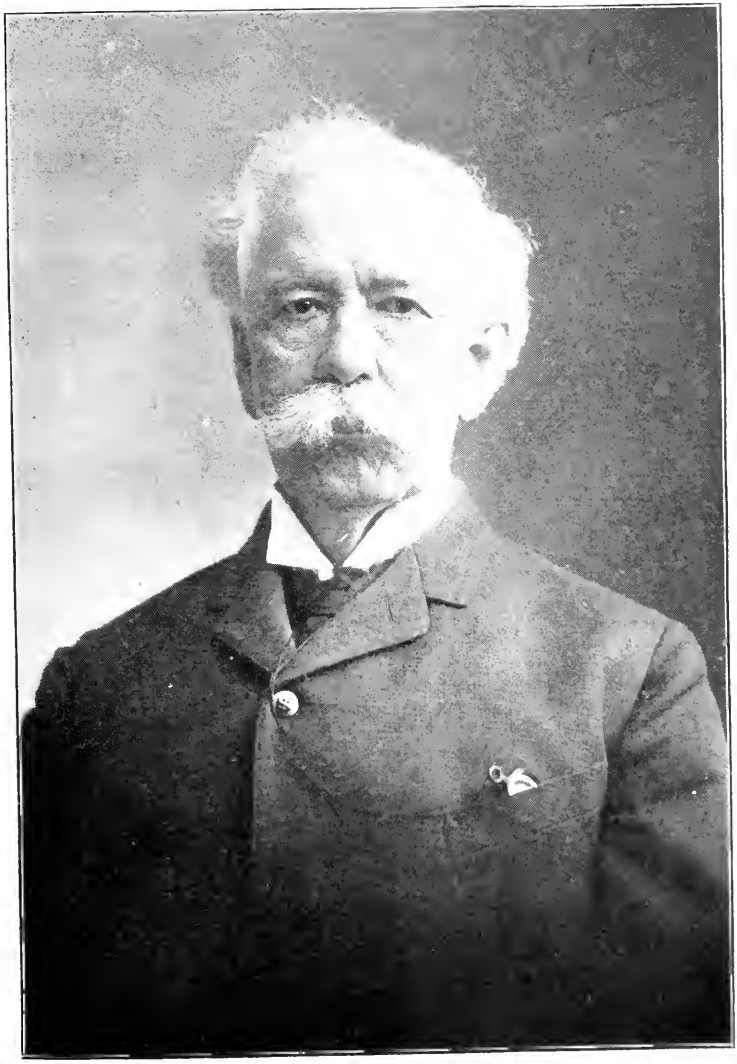
When near the enemy *always* be ready; Save the best fuel for the fight; and, If the enemy flees turn battleship into cruiser.

Permit me in conclusion to say, in language as appropriate now as in the days of King Henry the Sixth:

> "Welcome, brave Captain, and victorious lord;
> A stouter champion never handled sword."

ACCEPTANCE BY

GOV. JOHN G. McCULLOUGH



JOHN G. MCCULLOUGH.

ACCEPTANCE

In accepting the portrait, Governor McCullough said:

Mr. President, Governor Stickney and Gentlemen of the Joint Assembly:

As last week, so to-day, it is my privilege and pleasant duty in the name and on behalf of the State of Vermont, to accept the canvas that stands on the easel in yonder corridor.

Then it was the portrait of a dead hero. On this occasion it is the portrait of a living hero. Living or dead, Vermont is ever proud to do honor to her heroic sons. Let this canvas hang upon the walls of this Capitol building for all the years of the future as a fitting memento of the man.

The words of the resolution of the General Assembly of two years ago, just read by the Secretary, inviting Captain Clark, (it was then; Rear-Admiral Clark it is now, and should have been from the moment the Oregon entered the line of battleships around Santiago), to sit for his portrait to be placed here in commemoration of the distinguished services to his country, rendered on board the Oregon, and as a token of the abiding affection

and admiration of this people, are but the expression of the truthful and noble tribute of his native State, to her great naval commander.

And the words of the response of the gallant captain, that often, during that historic trip of fifteen thousand miles, as he drove the Oregon at break-neck speed and without an accident, swinging around the continent from San Francisco to Santiago, weighed down by his responsibilities, he was encouraged and inspired by the thought of the famous order of Sedgwick to the Sixth Corps, as they started on their march to Gettysburg, "Put none but Vermonters in front, and let the rest keep up;"—and was often encouraged and inspired too by the memory of Warner's boys hurrying down from Manchester, to save the day at Bennington;— and doubtless also often, (although he says nothing about it in his letter, for as he remarked in his modest way to Secretary Moody a few weeks ago, "You know, Mr. Secretary of the Navy, I was with Farragut"), he was encouraged and inspired by the recollection of that daring and brilliant and desperate feat of Admiral Farragut at Mobile Bay, when the torpedoes were exploding and his iron-clads were sinking and the Brooklyn was backing and confusing his battle line, lashing himself to the main-top of the Hartford and signalling his forces to move ahead, and winning, after

a three hours' fight, a victory that conferred imperishable renown upon the American Navy and that dimmed the lustre of Trafalgar:—these recollections and recalling these memories, show the innate greatness, the sublime courage, the fighting qualities of this "hill-born hero of the seas;" and that he was conscious all the while that upon his shoulders rested the reputation of his native State and upon him the eyes of the nation were centered. How well and how faithfully he met their expectations and performed his task, history will forever attest.

And the incident referred to by Governor Stickney, that while pushing the Oregon to her utmost, stopping for a little while at Rio, that the Oregon might catch her breath, and there finding the information from the Secretary of the Navy that the great Spanish fleet was on the Atlantic looking out for him, and giving him discretionary orders whether to remain in port under the pretense of repairing his ship, or to go ahead, called his boys together and after explaining to them the serious character of the situation, said to them: "Lads, I am going out and if we meet the Spanish fleet they will be handsomer before than after we have seen them;" and he did go out and kept going until he sank the Cristobal Colon off Santiago.

All these things show, Mr. President, the mettle of the man; and that it was in his blood; that the iron of these hills was in his veins, the marble of these mountains in his bones. They prove that Vermont still breeds Ethan Allens and John Starks.

Then let this portrait remain on the walls of this Capitol building—aye, though this stately edifice crumble into dust, let Vermont preserve this portrait, that her youth for all the years of the future may look upon it and learn to imitate and emulate the virtues and the valor of her distinguished son.

REMARKS OF

REAR ADMIRAL CHARLES E. CLARK

CHARLES E. CLARK.

ADMIRAL CLARK'S REMARKS

Mr. President, Members of the General Assembly and Friends:

I know that what I may say or fail to say will not be regarded by you as a measure of my appreciation of the honor of being presented to the Legislature of the State I love so much. I am deeply affected by it, by the thought of all it means, by what has been said and by the enthusiasm evoked. And I believe, indeed I am sure, that true friendship and regard and the attachment Vermonters feel for each other inspired the speakers and you who listened to and applauded their words.

And I am so grateful for all the honors that have been bestowed upon me here by votes that were unanimous, by acts of the Executives and by the officials of both Houses and the State. But I cannot thank you nor give expression to my feelings. You know how I must feel at being received in this way at the capital of my native State, within her State House walls, and by the chosen representatives of all her people.

The Joint Assembly dissolved.

FREDERICK G. FLEETWOOD,

Secretary of State.

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